United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council votes to allow supply of essential humanitarian assistance to Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) under sanctions resolution; military observers return to Sarajevo, according to United Nations spokesman.

+ Security Council, "dismayed" by Iraqi reference to "past claims to Kuwait", stresses inviolability of boundary between the two countries.

+ Inter-agency appeal for 680,000 people in Kenya affected by drought and massive influxes of refugees from Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia.

+ Slovenia asks for "relief corridor" and security zones in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as Executive Board of United Nations Children's Fund ends its general debate.

+ Commission of European Communities provides $16.7 million to pay construction costs of hospital for Palestinian population in Gaza Strip.

+ Palestinian Rights Committee, on twenty-fifth anniversary of Israeli occupation of Arab territories, draws attention to continuation of situation in defiance of Charter, resolutions and international efforts to bring about peaceful settlement.

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The Security Council today decided to allow the delivery of "commodities and products for essential humanitarian needs" under its resolution 757 (1992) concerning the sanctions against Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

The Council took that action by adopting resolution 760 (1992) unanimously, under which it said that the prohibitions in resolution 757 concerning the sale or supply to Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) of commodities or products, other than medical supplies and foodstuffs, and the prohibitions against financial transactions related thereto, "shall not apply ... to commodities and products for essential humanitarian needs".

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For information media—not an official record

Describing the situation in Sarajevo as improving, a United Nations spokesman said today that the team of military observers, led by the Chief of Staff of United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), Brigadier General, Louis MacKenzie, had been able to make its way through to the PTT Building. Another 80 observers were now on their way to the airport. The situation had also improved with regard to the cease-fire, the spokesman said, although it was "not ideal by any means".

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The Security Council has expressed "dismay" over references by Iraq to "past claims to Kuwait" without recalling that Iraq gave up those claims through its acceptance of resolution 687 (1991), which set the terms for the cease-fire in the Persian Gulf war.

In a Presidential statement read out yesterday afternoon by Council President Paul Noterdaeme (Belgium), the Council firmly rejected any suggestion that would dispute the very existence of Kuwait, a member State of the United Nations. The Council stressed to Iraq the inviolability of the international boundary between Iraq and Kuwait which was being demarcated by the Boundary Demarcation Commission, set up by the Council under the cease-fire resolution. That Commission was not reallocating territory between Kuwait and Iraq, the statement said, but simply carrying out the technical task necessary to demarcate the precise coordinates of the boundary between the two countries for the first time. The Council warned of "grave consequences that would ensue from any breach thereof".

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Two years of drought, combined with massive influxes of refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia and most recently the Sudan, have resulted in severe food and water shortages in north and eastern Kenya, according to a report on a special consolidated United Nations inter-agency appeal, totalling some $97.4 million for emergency relief to that country.

The report, issued by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, states that 20 districts in Kenya are estimated to be drought-affected and some 680,000 people are at most serious risk.

Speaking to correspondents at Headquarters today, the Coordinator for United Nations Humanitarian Affairs, Under-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, said some 450,000 refugees had arrived in Kenya from the Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. This had put the Kenyan economy under very serious strain, and the Kenyan Government had annonced an emergency situation.

According to the report, the ongoing relief efforts for the refugees and drought-affected alike were being hampered in some border areas by insecurity and banditry. Large numbers of weapons from neighbouring countries had increased insecurity in some areas, the report said, while ethnic clashes had

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hampered food production and displaced approximately 100,000 people .

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Slovenia has called for the establishment of humanitarian relief corridors and security zones in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as a temporary office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Slovenia.

In a statement to the Executive Board of UNICEF, as it was ending its general debate yesterday, the representative of Slovenia, Ignac Golob, said such an office should be opened in Slovenia's capital Ljubliana, and should participate in the upcoming conference on refugees in Yugoslavia to be held in that city. The Board should also appeal to Governments to provide increased international aid to the refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia who were in Slovenia. "Running for their lives, Muslims, Croats and others, tens of thousands of children among them, have been given no quarter, no mercy and no chance to take anything with them", Mr Golob said.

The representative of Ethiopia, Mulugeta Eteffa, said that improving the status of women in general would have an impact on improving the quality of life of mothers and their children. Roles traditionally assigned to women affected children more directly than any other social and economic factors. For example, approximately 500,000 women died each year from pregnancy-related problems, with 99 per cent of those deaths occurring in the developing countries.

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The Commission of the European Communities today signed a contract with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) providing $16.7 million to pay for construction costs of the first major hospital to be built in the Gaza Strip since 1967.

The new 232-bed general hospital will serve a rapidly increasing Palestinian population, now totalling over 700,000, of whom 550,000 are Palestinian refugees. The opening of the hospital, which will be located near Khan Younis in the southern part of the Gaza Strip, is scheduled for 1995.

The European Community's contribution is expected to cover construction costs. Equipment and related expenses prior to the opening will be about $6 million and an additional $15 million is needed to staff and operate the hospital for the first three years.

Health conditions in the Gaza Strip have deteriorated in recent years and the demand for medical care has increased dramatically. The ratio of beds per capita in Gaza is some 50 per cent less than the World Health Organization (WHO) minimum.

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The Palestinian Rights Committee, in a statement issued today, has drawn the attention of the international community to the continuation of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, in defiance of the Charter, resolutions and international efforts to bring about a just and peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question.

The statement, issued to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories, pointed out that the Palestinian people had expressed readiness to live in peace in a state of its own, alongside Israel. Israel, however, had increasingly resorted to armed repression and violations of fundamental human rights. The perpetuation of the occupation "threatens the credibility of the United Nations", the statement said.

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